

Before the
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20268-0001

Bentonville Post Office
Bentonville, Ohio

Docket No. A2011-58

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS
(December 12, 2011)

On August 30, 2011, the Commission received an appeal from Linda Naylor objecting to the closing of the Bentonville, OH Post Office. On September 1, 2011, the Commission issued Order No. 838 accepting the appeal, directing the Postal Service to file the administrative record by September 14, 2011, establishing a procedural schedule, and naming the undersigned Public Representative.¹ On September 9, 2011, the Postal Service filed the Administrative Record.² The Postal Service will serve Bentonville via rural carrier.³

The Postal Service asserts that it followed all procedures and considered all factors required by law.⁴ It does appear that the Postal Service followed proper procedures. However, it fails to demonstrate that patrons of the Bentonville Post Office will receive effective and regular service from a rural route carrier. Specifically, in a comment submitted in response to the Proposal to close, a customer stated,

¹ Notice and Order Accepting Appeal and Establishing Procedural Schedule, September 1, 2011.

² United States Postal Service Notice of Filing, September 9, 2011.

³ Final Determination (FD), at 1. The Final Determination is included in the Administrative Record as Item No. 47.

⁴ United States Postal Service Comments Regarding Appeal, October 24, 2011, at 3 (Postal Service Comments).

“Comments from West Union rural route residents say that they have received notices in their mail boxes telling them not to place money in the rural route boxes.” AR, Item No. 38, at 28F (original emphasis). The West Union rural route currently serves some residents of Bentonville.⁵ This route will serve at least some of the Bentonville PO Box holders after the Post Office closes.⁶

If the Postal Service itself is telling customers not to place money in mail boxes, then rural route service is not an acceptable substitute for a Post Office. The Postal Service’s canned responses to customer concerns about having to wait for the carrier or drive to a distant Post Office become specious. These canned responses assume that a customer *will* leave money in a mail box.⁷ And leaving a note (rather than money) in the box asking the carrier to sound his horn is no solution; the customer must still hang around within hearing distance waiting for the carrier. FD at 9, Concern No. 7.

The record contains conflicting or inaccurate statements about effective and regular service for patrons of the Bentonville Post Office. The Final Determination should be remanded.

Respectfully submitted,

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⁵ Petition for Review Received from Linda Naylor Regarding the Bentonville, OH 45105 Post Office, August 30, 2011, at 2, item 4; FD at 7, Concern No. 24.

⁶ Naylor Participant Statement, October 3, 2011, at 5 (file name “Naylor A2011-58.pdf”).

⁷ See, e.g., FD at 5, Concern No. 8.